Proper Storage of Food

Overview

- General Requirements
- Refrigerated Storage
- Frozen Storage
- Dry Storage
- Quality Considerations

General Requirements

- Rotate foods on a first in, first out (FIFO) basis; use older foods first
- Observe Approximate Storage Life
  - AF JMAM 23-210 is used as guide to preserve quality of foods. You will learn how to use this manual during the Surveillance Inspection lesson

General Requirements

- Store food at least 6 inches off the floor and away from the walls to facilitate pest control and cleaning.
- Space products and store them away from walls to allow the cold air to circulate around them (don’t overload refrigerators and freezers)

General Requirements

- If bulk items, such as flour, sugar, and grain foods are transferred into other containers, make sure the new container:
  - is properly labeled with the common name of the food
  - is equipped with a tight fitting lid

General Requirements

- To ensure best quality, maintain constant temperature and humidity (moisture content of the air)
  - Rising temperature increases evaporation of water from food (causes dehydration)
  - Excess humidity may cause mold, mildew, etc..

General Requirements

- Do not store foods near chemicals such as cleaning agents or pesticides
  - If space permits, store chemicals in a completely separate area away from the dry storage area in a locked and labeled cabinet

Refrigerated Storage

- Used to hold foods that require refrigeration (perishables) for a relative short periods of time, usually a few days
- Store raw foods completely separated from or under cooked or ready-to- eat foods

Refrigerated Storage

- Cold potentially hazardous foods must be kept at a temperature of 41° F or below
  - Thermometer should be placed in the warmest part of the refrigerator (closer to the door)
  - Store fish and shellfish in the coolest part of the refrigerator (in the back, closer to the cooling fans)

Refrigerated Storage

- Shelf life of some foods, such as milk, is shortened significantly at temperatures above 41°F
- Don’t store food under drippings from condensers/fans. They often contain environmental contaminants including pathogens like Listeria monocytogenes

Frozen Storage

- For long term storage and best quality, maintain foods frozen (usually 0° to -10° F)
- Frozen meats must be wrapped in moisture-proof paper to prevent them from drying out.

Dry Storage

- Use to store foods that do not require refrigeration (semi-perishable foods) such as cans, jars, etc.
- Ideal storage temperature is between 50° to 70° F to maximize the shelf life of the foods

Dry Storage

- Foods should be stored in a dry, clean location
  - Watch for roof leaks and insect/rodent harboring areas
- Do not store foods in toilet room, locker areas, mechanical rooms, garbage rooms and similar spaces, or under water and sewer lines

Quality Considerations

- To retain top quality, fruits and vegetables should be stored between 41° and 45°F. (store them in the warmest part of the refrigerator)
- Store onions, cantaloupes and other foods that have strong odors away from other fresh fruits and vegetables
  - Eggs shells and milk can also absorb odors very easily

Quality Considerations

- Some fruits and vegetables, such as bananas and potatoes, undergo undesirable chemical changes when they are refrigerated
- The quality of some foods is reduced by sunlight. Windows should be blocked out or shaded

Summary

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